

**City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
November 17, 2014 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers – City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

		October 2014-September 2015	
MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Wendy Gonsher, Chair	P	2	0
Benjamin Bean	P	2	0
Mark Fillers	P	2	0
Wanda Francis	P	2	0
Gwendolyn Haynes	A	0	1
Jason King (arr. 4:14)	P	2	0
Chris Lovell	P	2	0
Fred Roccanti	P	2	0
Gabe Sheffield	A	0	1
Jasmin Shirley	P	2	0
Joseph S. Van de Bogart	P	1	0

Staff Present

Mario DeSantis, Liaison and Housing Administrator
Jonathan Brown, Housing and Community Development Manager
Marcia Gair, Administrative Aide
J. Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of November 17, 2014, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Gonsher called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and roll was called. It was noted that a quorum was present.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

New member Joseph S. Van de Bogart introduced himself at this time. He is an attorney in Fort Lauderdale and was appointed to the Board by Vice Mayor Romney Rogers. Chair Gonsher noted that two additional members will be joining the Board at the next meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 13, 2014

Motion made by Ms. Francis, seconded by Mr. Fillers, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CDBG

Mr. Brown recalled that at the October Board meeting, he had identified approximately \$100,000 in unspent Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The City Manager's Office has suggested that the Board make a recommendation for the allocation of these funds. Once allocated, one-fourth of the funds must be spent by the recipient agencies by July 2015. Eight agencies have submitted unsolicited funding requests.

The Board discussed how they wished to allocate the funds, including the possibility of going through the RFP process again or reviewing the applications submitted by qualifying agencies during the original CDBG allocation process in 2014. It was noted that there are agencies applying for these funds which did not participate in the CDBG process earlier in the year, as well as current and former recipients of funds.

Mr. Brown reviewed the applicants currently receiving funds, stating that Women in Distress received \$45,000 as approved by the City Commission; they are now requesting an additional \$36,834.35. Jack and Jill Children's Center was approved for \$45,000 and is requesting an additional \$10,000. Broward Partnership for the Homeless was awarded \$53,027 and is requesting an additional \$100,000.

There was also discussion of having the eight agencies come before the Board in January 2015 with their requests, although Chair Gonsler expressed concern that if the Board did not make their recommendation until this time, the agencies might have a very brief time frame in which they must spend at least one-fourth of their funds.

If the funds are not allocated, the City Commission has the option to roll them over into other CDBG activities. Mr. Brown advised that it may be possible for the Board to roll these funds over into the next year; however, it was also pointed out that if the Board does not make an allocation decision, the City Commission could choose to allocate the funds as they saw fit.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Ms. Francis, that the Board fund, from this excess money, Women in Distress for \$36,800 and Jack and Jill [Children's Center] for \$10,000.

Ms. Shirley offered an **amendment** to the **motion**: to split [the funds] 50/50 between the two [agencies].

Mr. Brown pointed out that if an applicant received these funds and did not spend them, it would reflect negatively upon the agencies. Mr. Fillers declined to amend his **motion**.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. Brown advised that two agencies which have previously received CDBG funds have also applied for a portion of the unspent money. These are Russell Life Skills and Neighborhood Housing Foundation of America. Other applicants include Pattern Rare Woods and Design, and Serenity Family and Children's Services, which have not been extensively vetted by Staff at this time.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Ms. Shirley, to fund [Russell Life Skills] organization program for the \$45,000 as requested.

The Board discussed the request, noting that no current members were extensively familiar with this organization. It was reiterated that the Board could postpone a funding decision until January 2015, or return the funds to the City and allow the City Commission to determine how they were used.

Chair Gonsher expressed concern with allocating almost the entire balance of the remaining funds to a single agency without hearing from it and other applicants. Mr. Fillers explained that he had proposed funding this organization because they are a known agency and have previously received CDBG funds, which is not the case for all other applicants.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** failed 3-6 (Chair Gonsher, Mr. Bean, Mr. King, Mr. Lovell, Mr. Roccanti, and Mr. Van de Bogart dissenting).

Motion made by Ms. Shirley that the Board consider this \$54,000 with a City project [of] the City Manager's pleasure. The **motion** died for lack of second.

Motion made by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Roccanti, to carry those dollars over into next year and to communicate to the Commission that [the Board] understands that they had given the dollars back to [the Board] to use, but that [the Board] is not prepared to do so at this time because [they] would like to further vet responsibly the organizations that are vying for the money.

It was clarified that proposals from the applicants would be submitted in December, to be discussed in January. It was also clarified that the intent of the **motion** was to hold the funds until the next CDBG cycle.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 8-1 (Mr. Fillers dissenting).

V. HOPWA

Mr. DeSantis advised that the City received a letter from the Susan B. Anthony Recovery Center, stating that they no longer wished to receive Housing Opportunities

for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) funds as of October 1, 2014. The agency had been allocated \$84,000 by the Board. The agency has spent the previous year's allocation and has officially been closed out for the fiscal year.

He continued that a HOPWA training session will hopefully be held in February 2015 at 3 p.m., one hour before the regular meeting time. If this time does not accommodate as many members as hoped, Mr. DeSantis will attempt to meet with members one-on-one for this training. There was consensus from the Board members on this proposed time.

Mr. DeSantis continued that one major change to the HOPWA process is that scoring will no longer be determined by points, but by ranking of agencies. The process will be facilitated by the City's Procurement Department, to whom the members' rankings will be submitted.

- **Application Review**

Chair Gonsler stated that she had not felt comfortable ranking the agencies that wished to take over units formerly owned by the Housing Authority, as she had questions for those agencies. It was determined that the Board would ask questions of the agencies' representatives at today's meeting, rank the agencies accordingly, and return the ranking to Mr. DeSantis by the end of the week.

It was clarified that no conflict of interest is considered to exist unless a Board member, or a relative of that member, receives a financial benefit from a given organization. Ms. Shirley advised that she was a non-paid Board member of Broward Regional Health Planning Council, which constituted a voting conflict; however, it was clarified that she may participate in discussions.

- 1. Broward House**

Steve Nolte, Chief Operating Officer of Broward House, stated that the agency has been delivering its project-based programs for 20 years. They currently own eight buildings, which contain 64 apartments. At present, 94 residents live in Broward House's project-based housing through HOPWA, which pays 77% of rents. Two-thirds of residents are on Social Security disability. The agency employs three individuals as part of its maintenance staff, as well as one case manager.

Mr. Nolte responded to questions from the Board members, explaining that there are different levels of expectation for the three separate HOPWA programs. Facility-based housing is assisted living, where individuals reside with a one-year time limit; however, the focus of the proposal before the Board is on project-based housing. He pointed out that individuals in this program will always be considered disabled, and rent typically takes one-third of their monthly income.

Mr. Nolte confirmed that Broward House's preference is to assume ownership of the facility rather than leasing it from the City. He explained that if the agency owns the facility, they have a vested interest in ensuring that the inside and outside of the units are kept in very good condition. The agency eventually hopes to move project-based housing from a permanent to a transitional type of housing.

It was noted that Broward House's budget does not include property tax, because if the facility is signed over to the agency by January 1, 2015, property tax would not apply. Mr. DeSantis advised that the award of the units is on the City Commission Agenda for December 16, 2014; if a decision is made at that time, the question is how quickly the Housing Authority of Fort Lauderdale will work with the City to complete the necessary paperwork. He concluded that he felt the January 1 deadline was a realistic time frame.

The Board reviewed specific budget items listed in the agency's proposal, as well as its operating capital. Mr. DeSantis confirmed that procedures and accounting mechanisms to track program income are in place; the agency has spent 100% of its facility-based housing dollars from the previous year, as well as nearly 100% of their project-based dollars. Unspent tenant-based dollars were related to rent and utilities that were not spent because new clients were not brought into the program at the time.

2. Broward Regional Health Planning Partnership

Natasha Markman, Program Manager for Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC), and Michelle Rogiere, Division Director, explained that a trend is expected toward project-based rather than tenant-based rental vouchers. BRHPC plans to provide a cash match of \$25,000 for each year of the three-year program. They have not had prior opportunities to purchase properties in recent years. In the future they hope to acquire additional properties.

Ms. Rogiere continued that BRHPC employs part-time maintenance staff four days each week at their leased building. They hope to offer full-time maintenance employment in the future. Ms. Markman explained that BRHPC's current housing stability program includes workshops for clients and monthly assistance in reviewing their savings. The agency has budgeted to provide this assistance for clients in the new properties as well. Their plan for performance indicators will include tracking of clients' goals during the next year.

Chair Gonsler pointed out that providing a housing plan and tracking achievements is part of the agency's basic responsibility. It was clarified that Mr. DeSantis is working with BRHPC on how the necessary figures can be provided, and will distribute this information to the Board once it has been sent to him. He confirmed that there are no monitoring issues with the agency, which has expended its Permanent Housing Placement (PHP) and Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utilities (STRMU) funding.

Mr. DeSantis requested that only the Board members present today provide their ranking of the two agencies to his office by Friday, November 21. He will enter the information into a spreadsheet and determine the agencies' total scores.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Lovell commented that Board members might like the opportunity to visit some of the project- and facility-based housing funded with HOPWA dollars. Chair Gonsler noted, however, that during the last HOPWA funding cycle, the City's Procurement Department had stated they would prefer the members not conduct site visits. Mr. DeSantis said he would seek clarification on this issue from Procurement or from the City Attorney's Office.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Chair Gonsler encouraged the Board members to attend the City Commission meeting scheduled for December 17, 2014. The next Board meeting will be January 13, 2015.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]